

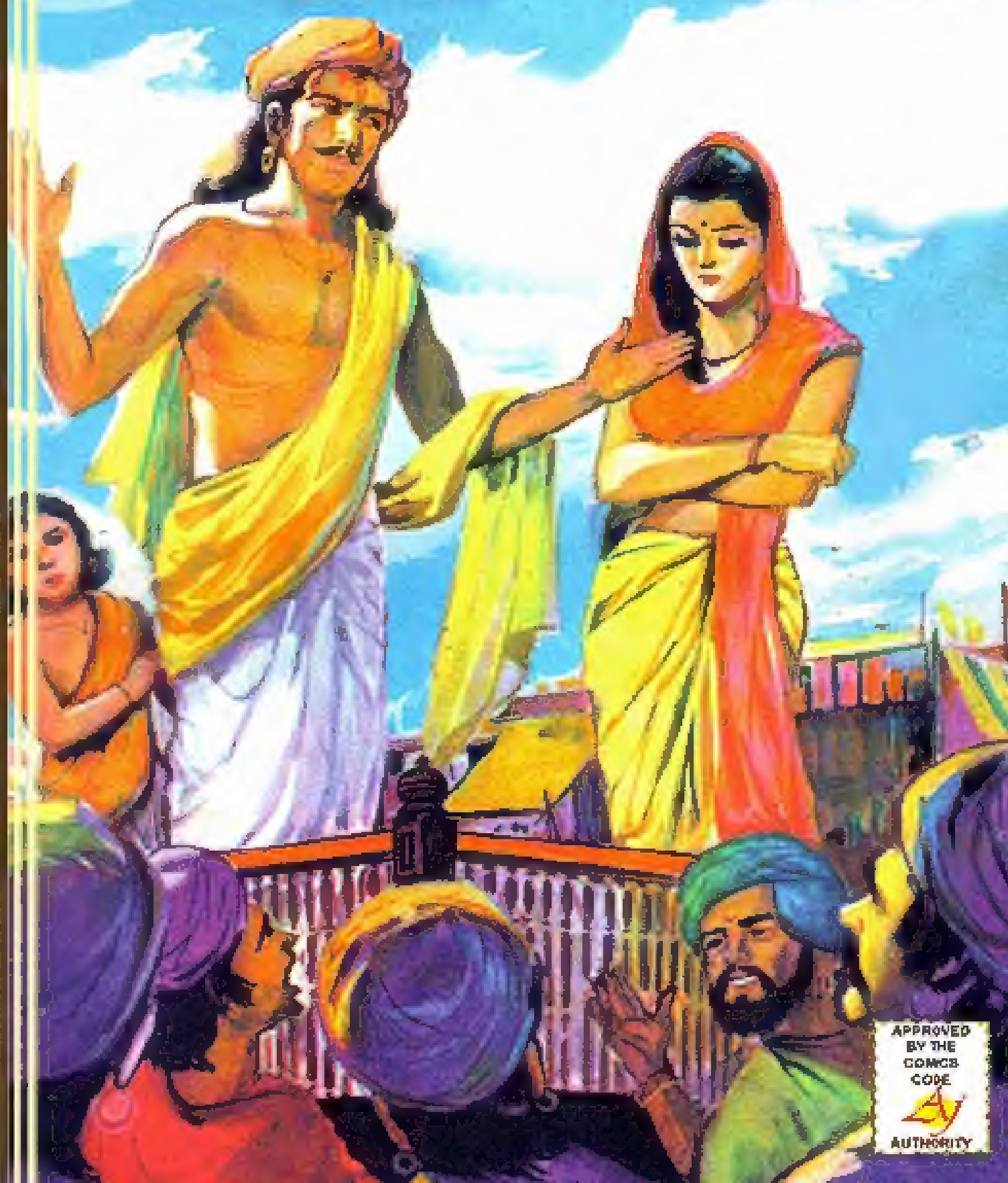


No. 17

HARISCHANDRA

THE STORY OF THE MYTHOLOGICAL KING WHOSE
NAME IS SYNONYMOUS WITH TRUTH

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA



APPROVED
BY THE
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AUTHORITY

India is a land of countless legends and stories. A few of them have survived the onslaught of time and remained alive over the centuries. One such story is that of Harischandra, the king whose honesty was unmatched.

The story as it has come down to us has many variations, from the original narration in the Markandeya Purana. The folk-singers, the poets and the dramatists, have all handled the story and have all added to it—an incident here, a character there—for greater effects. It is worth mentioning that Gandhiji whose experiments with truth are justly famous, was greatly inspired by a dramatic representation of this story, which he had seen in his boyhood.

The story of a king, who, pitted against forces immensely more powerful than himself faces them with an unflinching faith in integrity, is not only dramatic but ennobling. That is the secret of its everlasting appeal.

Amar Chitra Katha is a continuing series
and two titles are published every month.
Over 150 titles are now on sale.

HARISCHANDRA

IT WAS THE ERA OF TRETA! HARISCHANDRA WAS THE KING OF AYODHYA! A RIGHTEOUS KING, HE WAS LOVED AND RESPECTED BY ALL HIS SUBJECTS. ONE DAY HARISCHANDRA HAD GONE TO THE FOREST WHEN HE HEARD A CRY...



THINKING IT WAS A WOMAN IN DISTRESS,
HARISCHANDRA RUSHED TOWARDS THE SOUND.
SOON HE CAME UPON A CLEARING IN THE WOOD.





A FEW DAYS LATER, HARISCHANDRA WAS SEATED ON HIS THRONE. SUDDENLY A LOUD VOICE BROKE THE SILENCE.

HARISCHANDRA!



AS VISHNUPADMA APPROACHED HIM, THE KING FELT UNEASY.

I HAVE COME FOR WHAT YOU PROMISED ME! I WANT YOUR KINGDOM!

MY KINGDOM?



YES! IF YOU FAIL TO KEEP YOUR PROMISE, MY CURSE WILL COME UPON AYODHYA!



AS THE HUSHED COURTIER'S WATCHED, HARISCHANDRA TOOK THE SAGE INSIDE.



THE MINISTERS TRIED TO REASON WITH THE ABDICATING KING.



THE WHOLE CITY CAME TO THE ROAD TO WATCH THE THREE LOVELY PEOPLE, HARISCHANDRA, QUEEN SAVYA AND PRINCE ROHITASWA, GOING AWAY. THEY ALL WEPT, FOR THEY LOVED THEIR KING, THEIR QUEEN AND THE YOUNG PRINCE.

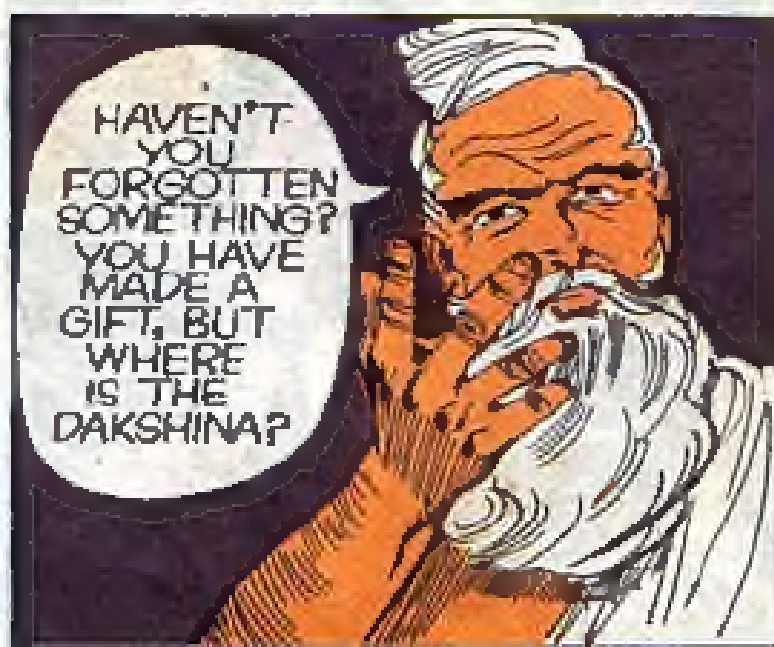


AFTER WALKING A FEW MILES, HARISCHANDRA HEARD SOMEONE CALL HIM FROM BEHIND. HE TURNED ROUND TO FIND THE SAGE VISHNAMITRA COMING TOWARDS THEM.



WAIT!

WITH EVERY GIFT GIVEN, ONE HAD TO GIVE A DAKSHINA - AN HONORARIUM! HARISCHANDRA HAD GIVEN AWAY EVERYTHING! HE HAD NOTHING LEFT FOR DAKSHINA!



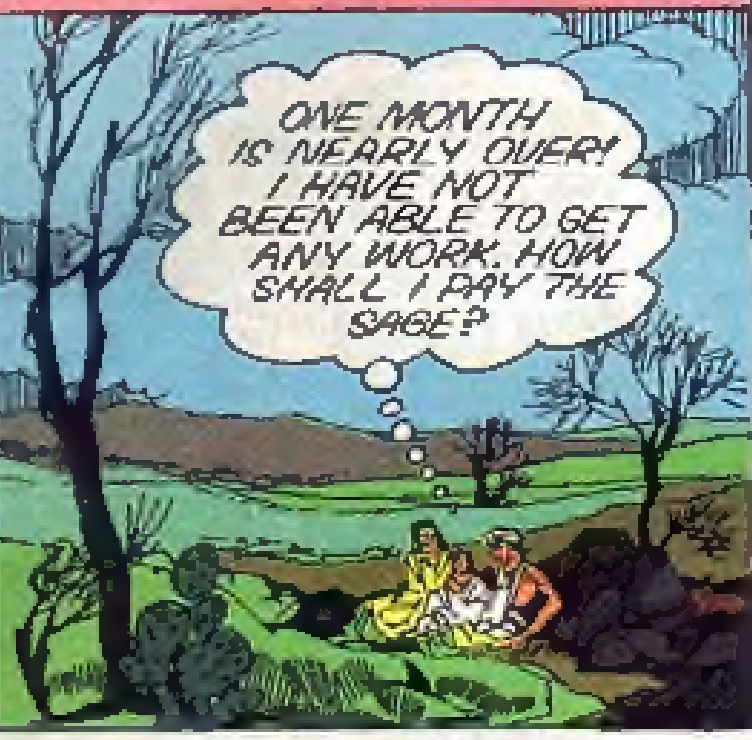
HAVEN'T YOU FORGOTTEN SOMETHING? YOU HAVE MADE A GIFT, BUT WHERE IS THE DAKSHINA?



YOU MUST FULFIL YOUR PROMISE! YOUR DAKSHINA IS DUE!


PLEASE GIVE ME A MONTH!

THE KING AND THE QUEEN AND THE YOUNG PRINCE ROHTASNA ROAMED FROM LAND TO LAND. IT WAS A LONG JOURNEY, THROUGH FORESTS, THROUGH DESERTS.




ONE MONTH IS NEARLY OVER! I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET ANY WORK. HOW SHALL I PAY THE SAGE?

AT LAST THEY REACHED THE TEMPLE CITY OF VARANASI.



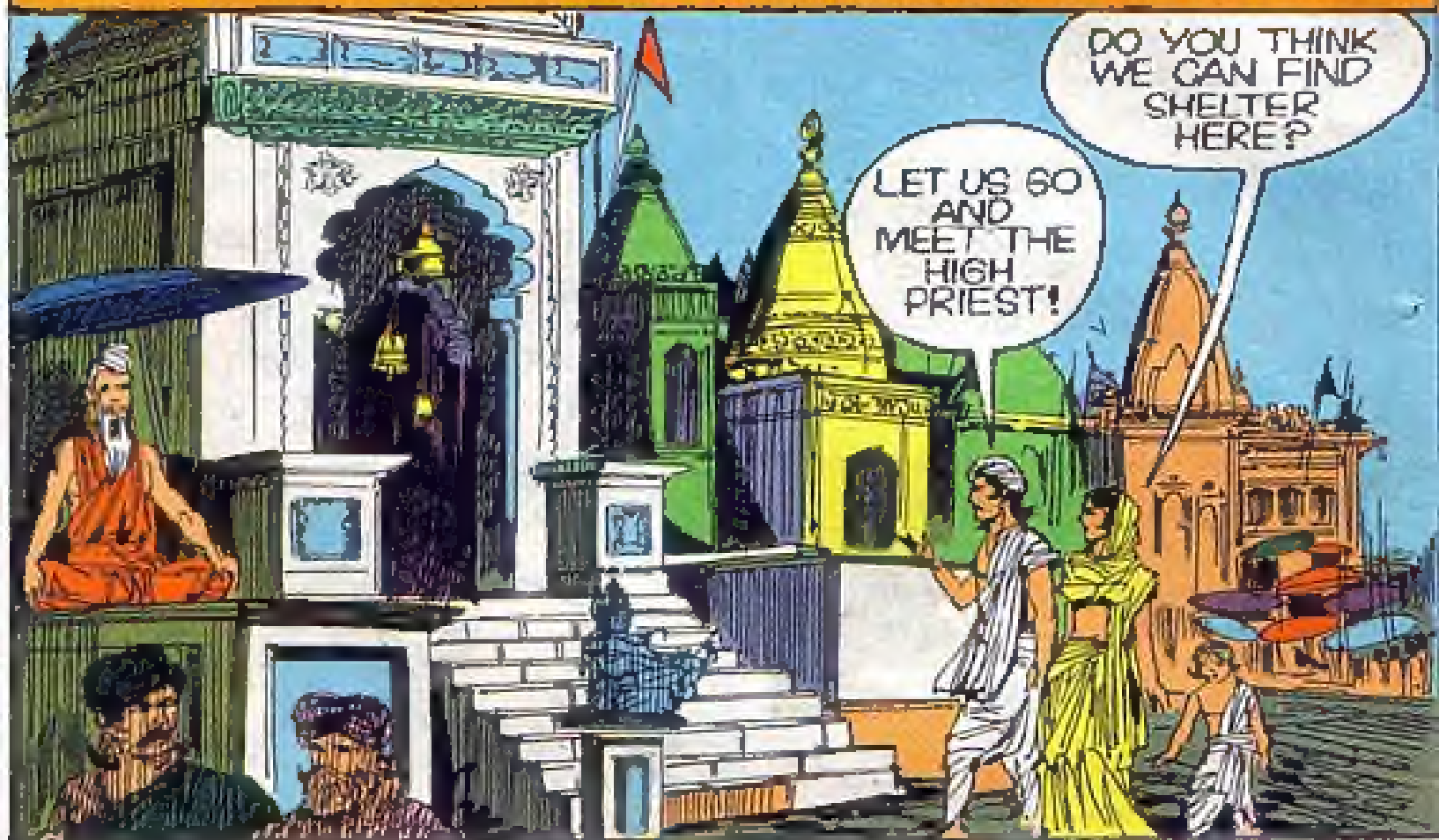
I HOPE I SHALL GET SOME WORK HERE!



HOW LONG SHALL WE ROAM LIKE THIS? THE CHILD IS TIRED.

FATHER! WHY DIDN'T YOU BRING OUR CHARIOT?

THE TEMPLES OF VARANASI STOOD MAJESTICALLY ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER GANGA. THE TIRED KING AND HIS FAMILY WENT UP TO A TEMPLE.







MOTHER! I AM
VERY HUNGRY!
PLEASE GIVE
ME SOME FOOD!

YES, DEAR!
YOUR FATHER
HAS GONE TO
LOOK FOR WAMP!
HE WILL FIND
SOME FOOD!



TAKE THIS FOOD! I BROUGHT
IT FROM THE T-MALL!

DO WE HAVE TO
FEG FOR
OUR FOOD
N AMP



THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY
TO FEEL MORE
I CAN SELL MYSELF!

OH,
NO!
NO!

THE MARKET PLACE.

WHO WILL
BUY ME? I CAN
(X) ANY
WORK!

LOOK
AT THAT
THAT
MARRIAGE AT
WORKING
ME (X)!

THE DEGRADATION OF
SOCIETY AFTER THE ADAM

WILL YOU
BUY ME?

NO YOU
LACK
WE CAN!

I WANT SELL
MYSELF I CAN
SELL MYSELF!

DEAR
BUY ME!

NOBODY WILL BUY
YOU! BUT SOMEONE
MAY BUY YOUR WIFE FOR
NEXT -
WORK!

QUEEN SARVA HAD HEARD WHAT
THE PRINCE SAID. SHE WAS
AMAZED BY HIS WISDOM.

NO ONE WILL BUY YOU!
BUT YOU HAVE SOMETHING
ELSE FOR SALE.

WHAT
DO
YOU
MEAN?

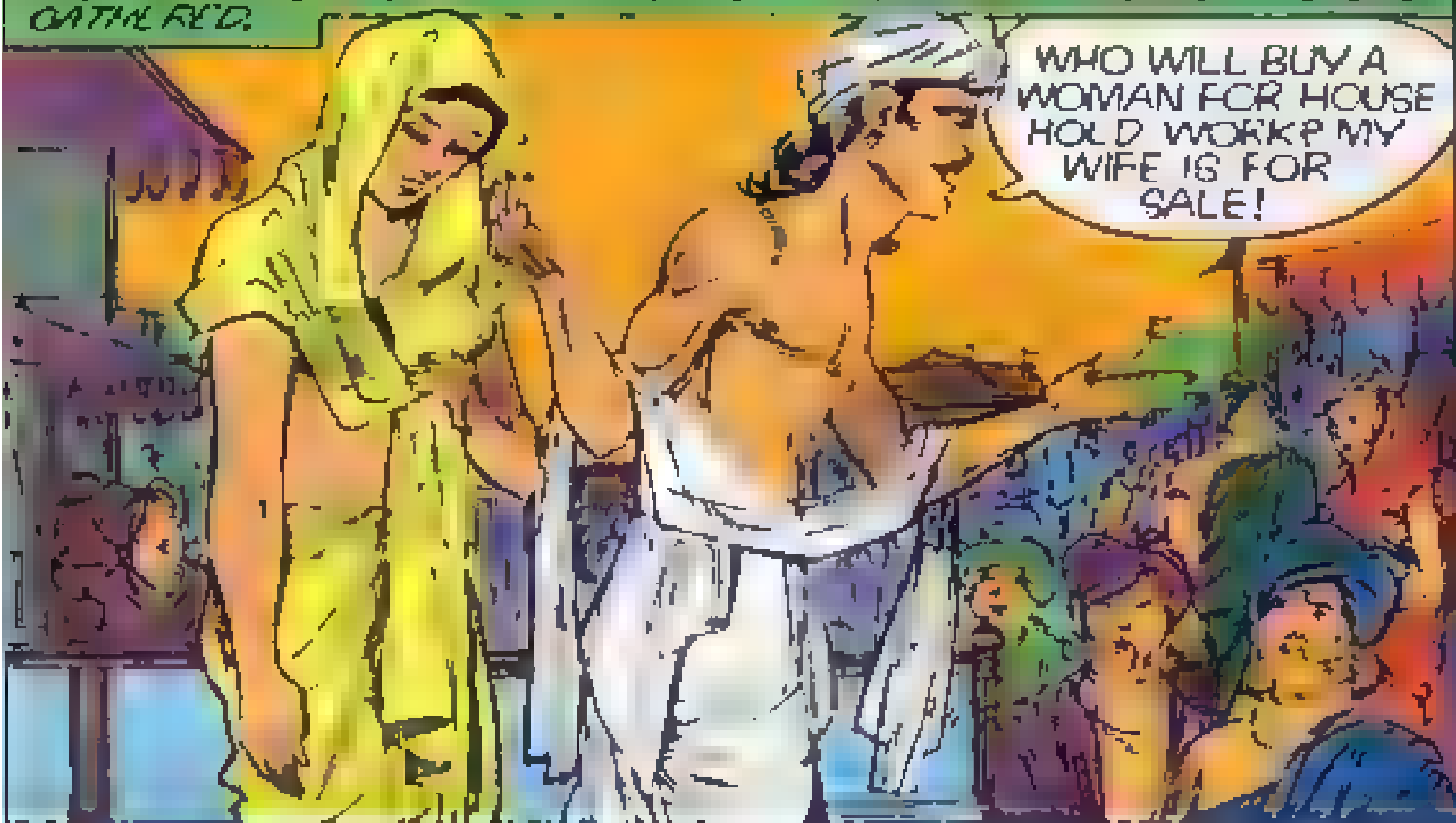
I HAVE GIVEN YOU
A SON! MY LIFE IS FILLED!
SELL ME AND PAY
YOUR DEBT!

DO YOU
KNOW
WHAT
YOU ARE
SAYING?
SELL
MY OWN
WIFE?

TRUTH IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN
HUMAN FEELINGS! YOU
MUST UPHOLD THE TRUTH!
DO YOU REMEMBER
WHAT THE
SAGE SAID?

YES,
I REMEMBER!

WITH A HEAVY HEART HARI'S CHANDRA WENT TO THE MARKET PLACE. THEY CLIMBED THE PLATFORM ERECTED FOR AUCTIONS. SOON A CROWD GATHERED.



WHO WILL BUY A WOMAN FOR HOUSE HOLD WORK? MY WIFE IS FOR SALE!



WHAT KIND OF A MAN ARE YOU TO SELL YOUR WIFE?



I AM NO MAN BUT A HEARTLESS MONSTER! BUT MUST DO WHAT I MUST DO!

A BRAHMAN OFFERED
TO BUY THE QUEEN.

I WILL
TAKE
HER!

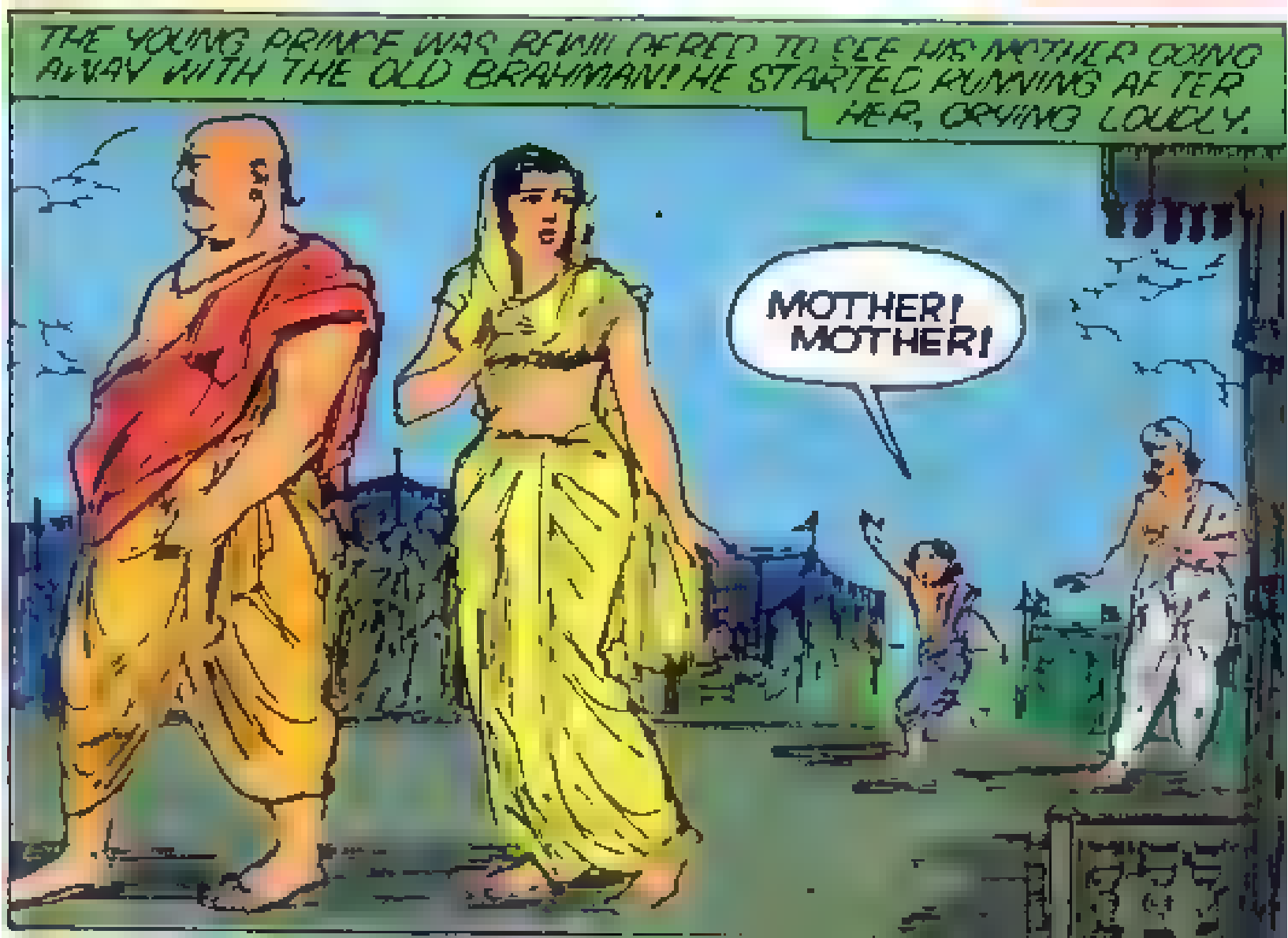
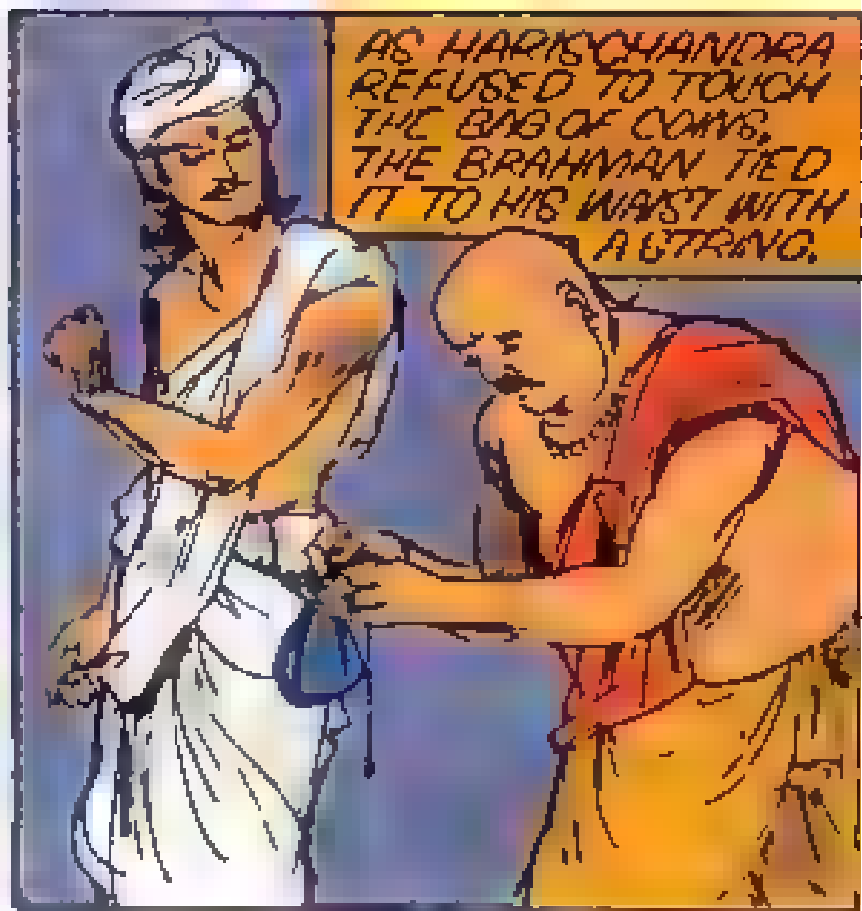
WHAT
WEEK WILL
YOU
GIVE
HER?

SHE WILL
BE MY
WIFE'S
SERVANT.
WHAT IS
HER
PRICE?

HOW CAN A MAN
FIX THE PRICE
OF HIS WIFE, THE
MOTHER OF
HIS SON?

THE BRAHMAN WAS DELIGHTED HE
COULD OFFER ANY PRICE HE LIKED

THEN TAKE THESE
FIVE HUNDRED GOLD
COINS AND GIVE UP ALL
CLAIM ON HER!



HEARING HER SON'S CRY, THE QUEEN'S
HEART WAS FILLED WITH PAIN!
SHE COULD NOT GO FARTHER!

MOTHER!
WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?

COME ALONG! WE ARE
GETTING
LATE!



PLEASE LET ME
TAKE HIM WITH ME!
HE CAN'T LIVE
WITHOUT ME!



THE BRAHMIN WAS GLAD HE COULD BUY THE CHILD ALSO. HE
OFFERED SOME MORE WRAVE / AS THE PRICE OF YOUNG KUNTI INSANA.

HERE'S ANOTHER
TWO-FE TV! I SHALL
BUY THE BOY
AS WELL!

MY
SON
TOO!



HARPOCRATES STOOD HELPLESSLY WATCHING HIS WIFE AND SON
HEARS THAT I AM BY THE GUN WHO HAD KILLED THEM.



HARYSHANDRA UNTHO THE
PURSE FROM HIS BELT AND
GAVE IT TO THE SAGE.

WHAT IS THIS? THIS
IS NOT ENOUGH!!
YOU HAVE TO PAY
ME TWO-FIFTY MORE!

NOT
ENOUGH?
BUT I'VE
NOTHING
ELSE
LEFT!

GET IT
SOMEHOW.
I SHALL
COME AT
NIGH -
FALL!

UNTHA GOT VERY HEARTY FOR HIM AND SAT DOWN ON THE STEPS
BEHIND THE HOUSE. THE SAGE AND HIS WIFE HEARD NO WAY
OF HAVING MORE MONEY FOR HIM.

I'M TRYING
ONCE MORE!

RETURNING TO THE MARKET-
PLACE, HARISCHANDRA STOOD ON
THE PLATFORM AGAIN-THIS
TIME A LONELY FIGURE.



THE PEOPLE RECOGNISED
HIM. MANY LAUGHED



HE WOULD EN THE EVENING A CHALDIA WHO HAD THE
KEEPEE OF THE CHALDIA IN LAKSHMI NAGAR, WHO WAS THE LUTHER.





A SKULL AND A
STICK IN HIS HANDS!
HE IS A
CHANDALA!

WILL
YOU WORK
FOR ME?



HAVE I
COME TO SUCH
A LOW STATE
THAT I HAVE TO
WORK WITH
CHANDALS?

BUT HIRISCHANDRA HAD NO CHOICE THE
DAY WOULD BE OVER SOON AND THEN
VYASAKITHA WOULD COME FOR
HIS MONEY.



YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY
ME TWO HUNDRED
AND FIFTY
GOLD COINS!

ALL RIGHT!
FOLLOW ME!


AFTER PAYING VISHWANATHA HIS DAKSHINA, HARISCHANDRA WALKED WITH HIS NEW MASTER TO THE PLACE OF WORK.



WHAT WORK DO I HAVE TO DO?


A man in a white dhoti and shawl (Harischandra) is talking to a man in a green shirt and red dhoti (Vishwanatha). They are standing in front of a stone wall. In the background, there is a large, colorful, abstract shape resembling a flame or a sunset.

WHATEVER WORK A CHANDALA DOES!



DO I HAVE TO LIVE IN THAT HUT?

The two men are walking through a forest. Harischandra is in the foreground, wearing a white dhoti and shawl. Vishwanatha is behind him, wearing a green shirt and red dhoti. They are walking towards a small hut with a thatched roof.



YES. YOUR DUTY IS TO WAIT ON CREMATORS AND DEMAND THE CLOTH, RICE AND MONEY. A SIXTH PART GOES TO THE KING, THREE TO ME AND THE REST WILL BE YOURS!

A close-up of Vishwanatha, who is wearing a red headband and a green shirt. He has a mustache and is looking angry. He is holding a stick in his right hand.



HARISCHANDRA'S DAYS PASSED COLLECTING MONEY FROM THE CHAMBERS AND WATCHING THE FLAMES.



THE SIGHT OF THE FIRE AND THE FLAMES SOON MADE HIS FACE CHANGE HIS SKIN HAD SHRIVELLED. FEW COULD HE URGE HIM.



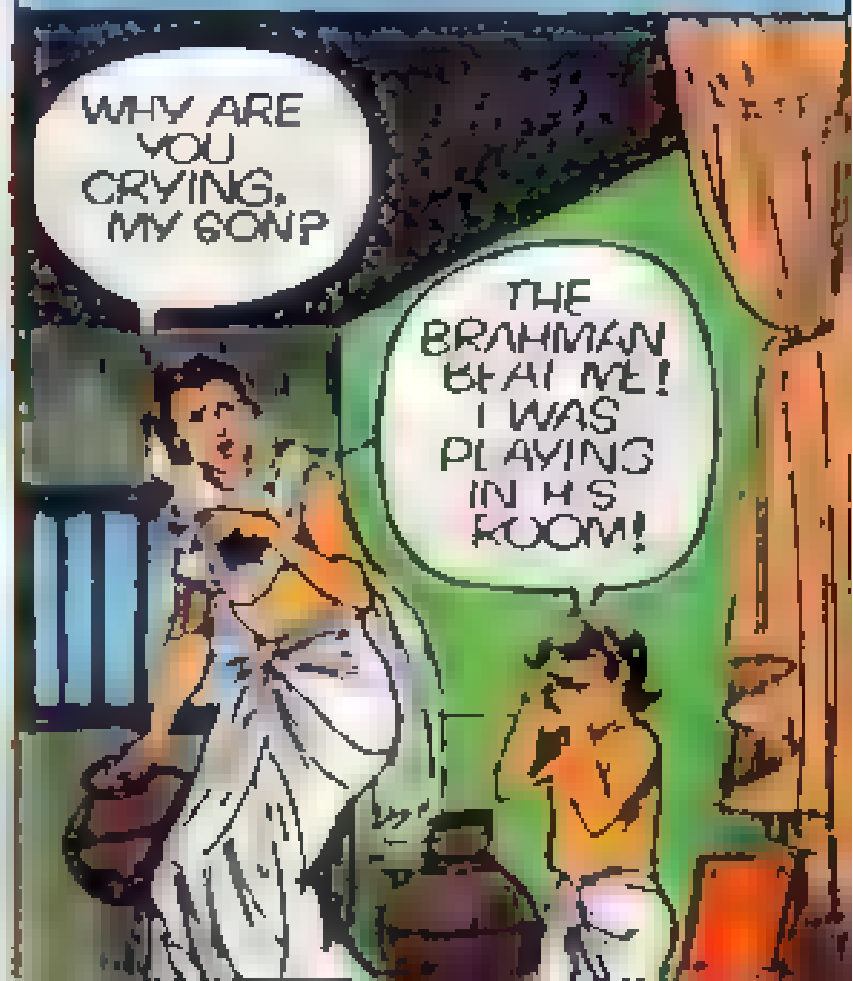
THE DAYS PASSED, THE KING WENT ON DOING HIS WORK. THE FIRE BURNT IN THE CREMATION GROUND. THE HEAT AND SMOKE WOULD VEIL HAYSHAVUKA'S EYES AND HE DREAMT OF HIS LOST KINGDOM.



HE DREAMT OF THE LITTLE PRINCE ASLEEP ON HIS PINK BED. IT ALL SEEMED SO FAR AWAY.



MEANWHILE THE QUEEN HAD TO WORK DAY AND NIGHT IN THE BRAHMAN'S KITCHEN.



WHY ARE YOU CRYING, MY SON?

THE BRAHMAN BEAT ME! I WAS PLAYING IN HIS ROOM!

GO TO THE GARDEN! YOU CAN PLAY THERE!

ALL RIGHT MOTHER!

WHEN THE QUEEN CAME TO HER ROOM AFTER THE DAY'S WORK, SHE FOUND THE BED EMPTY. ROHITASWA WAS NOT THERE.

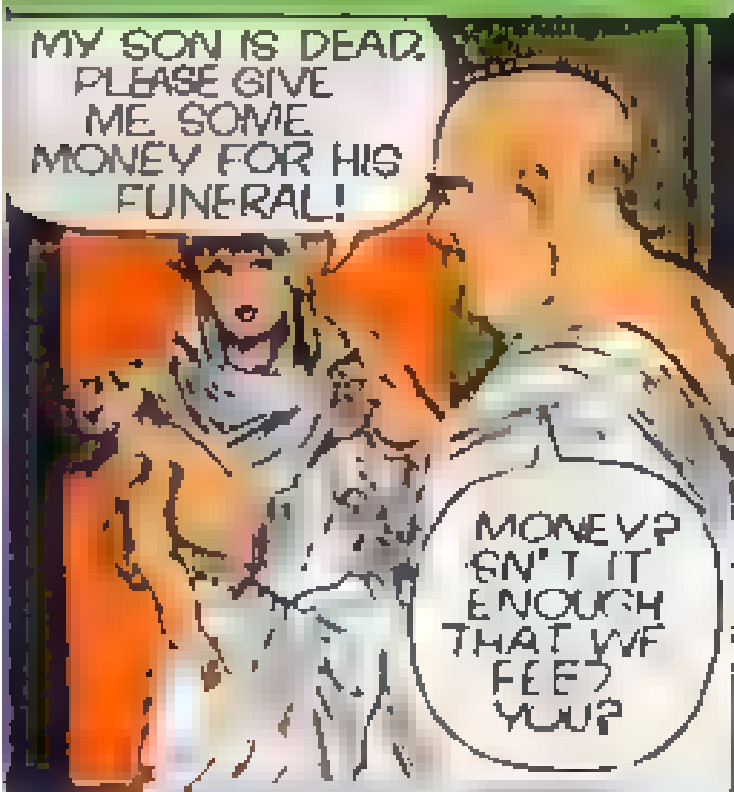
WHERE IS HE?
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM?

HOLDING A LAMP IN HER HAND, SAVVA WENT FROM ROOM TO ROOM LOOKING FOR HIM & IN THE END SHE HE ENTERED THE GARDEN.

DOOR ROHITASWA!
HE IS SLEEPING UNDER THE TREE!

HE IS COLD!
WHAT ARE THESE MARKS ON MY SON! A SERPENT HAS BITTEN HIM!

HER EYES FILLED WITH TEARS, THE QUEEN CARRIED THE LITTLE CHILD BACK TO THE HOUSE AND AWOKED THE BRAHMAN.



QUIETLY, WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, THE QUEEN STARTED WALKING THROUGH THE DESERTED STREET OF THE CITY.



NEAR THE GATE OF THE CREMATION GROUND, THE BEARDED CHANDALA BLOCKED HER WAY.



HARSHANANDA COULD NOT SEE THE WOMAN'S FACE WHICH WAS COVERED BY A VEIL.



SUDDENLY HARISCHANDRA'S EYES FELL
ON THE DEAD CHILD'S FACE.



WAIT!

THE CHILD'S
FACE BEARS
THE MARK
OF ROYALTY!
WHO IS HE?

WHY IS
MY HEART
BEATING SO
FAST?



HE IS INDEED
A ROYAL CHILD!
HIS FATHER
WAS
HARISCHANDRA!



WHAT DID
YOU SAY?

MY SON!
MY SON!



THE WOMAN WAS STARTLED WITH THE CRY. THE VOICE SEEMED FAMILIAR. SHE PEELED CLOSE AT THE BEARDED, SHRIVELLED FACE.

WHY DID YOU CRY
OUT? LET ME LOOK AT
YOUR FACE... MY
HUSBAND!

YES! I'M THAT
WRETCHED MAN!
BUT YOU WILL HAVE
TO BRING THE
CLOTH AND RICE!

MY HUSBAND
WHO WAS A KING
IS NOW A CHANDALA?
YOU ARE ASKING THE
PAYMENT FOR
YOUR SON'S
FUNERAL?

I HAVE
NO CHOICE!
I CANNOT
DEPRIVE MY
MASTER
OF HIS
DUES!



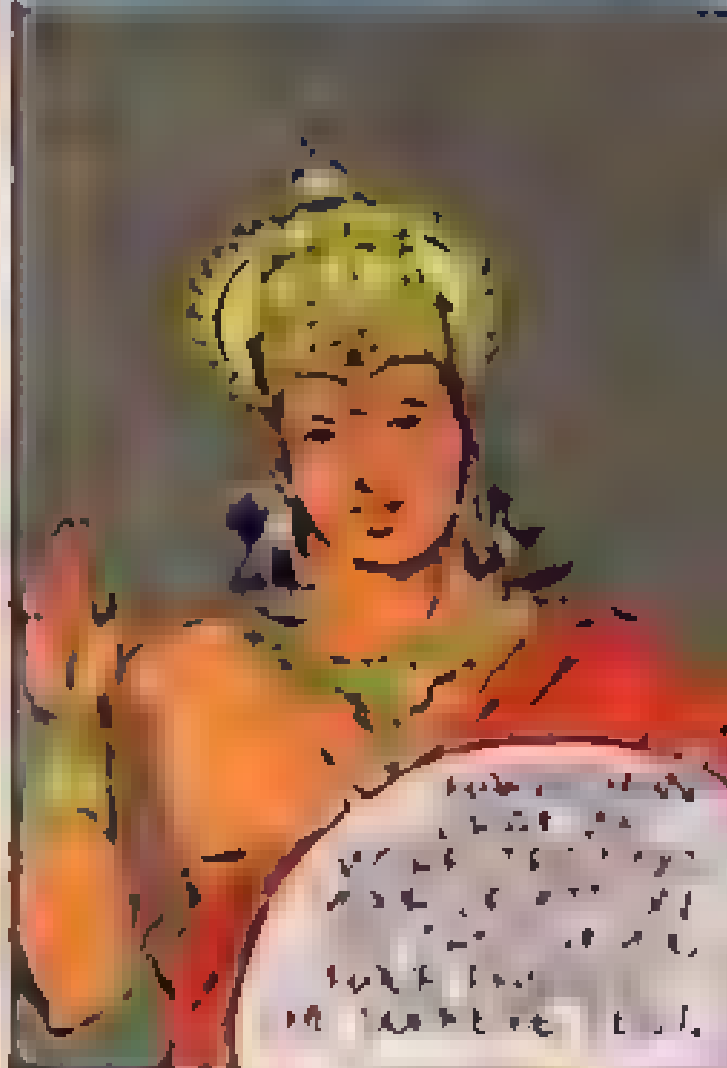
THAT WAS THE (MAYBE) ONLY REASON
 WHY HE HAD TO GO TO THE
 END OF THE LINE. (MAYBE) HE HAD
 NO OTHER CHOICE TO SEE THEM



WHAT
 DOES THIS
 MEAN?



THAT IS WHY, THE KING OF
 THE WORLD, (MAYBE) HE HAD



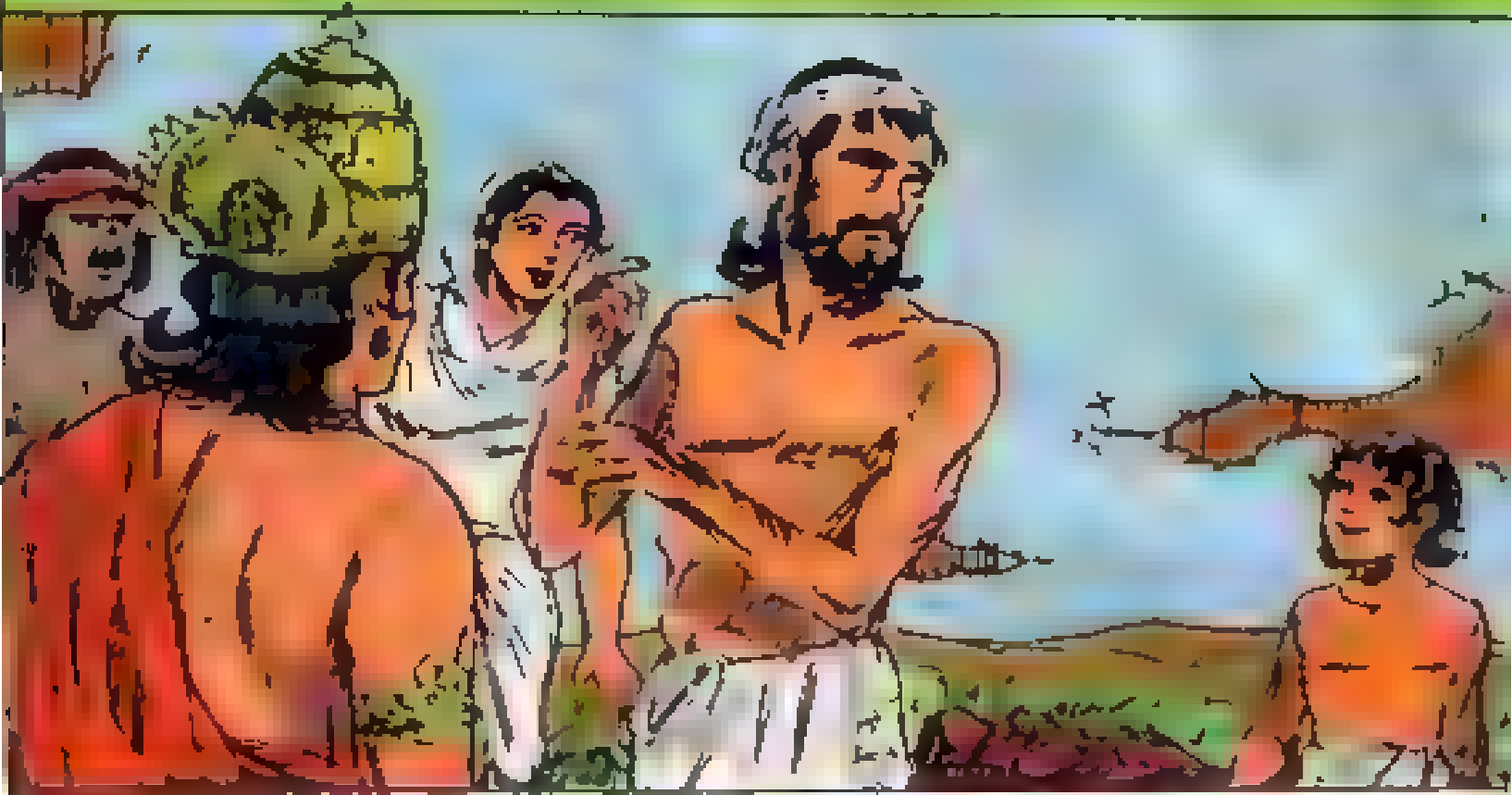
I AM THE
 KING OF THE
 WORLD, (MAYBE)
 I AM THE
 KING OF THE
 WORLD, (MAYBE)

BUT, MY LORD, DID
 YOU HAVE TO TEST
 ME BY TAKING
 AWAY MY (MAYBE)
 CHILD?



I AM THE KING OF THE WORLD, (MAYBE)

SEEING INDRA'S SMILE, THE PUZZLED KING TURNED HIS EYES TO WHERE HIS SON'S BODY LAY. HE SAW A STRANGE SIGHT. ROKITRANA WAS STANDING THERE DRINKING.



THEN SOMEONE CALLED HIM SOFTLY

HARISCHANDRA! MY FRIEND, FORGIVE ME FOR TESTING YOU SO HARSHLY!

SAGE VISHVAMITRA



I HAVE COME TO TAKE YOU TO YOUR KINGDOM

BUT HOW CAN I GO. I HAVE SOLD MYSELF TO THE CHANDALA





WORD HAD REACHED THE KINGDOM THAT THE KING WAS COMING BACK. PEOPLE CAME OUT OF THEIR HOUSES TO WELCOME THEIR KING.



THE STREETS WERE LINED BY PEOPLE. MANY WERE CRYING WITH JOY. THE KING WHOM THEY LOVED SO MUCH WAS COMING BACK.



Daddy!
Read me a
Story.



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